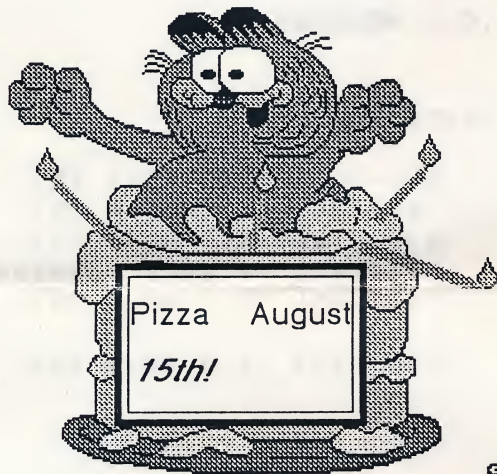




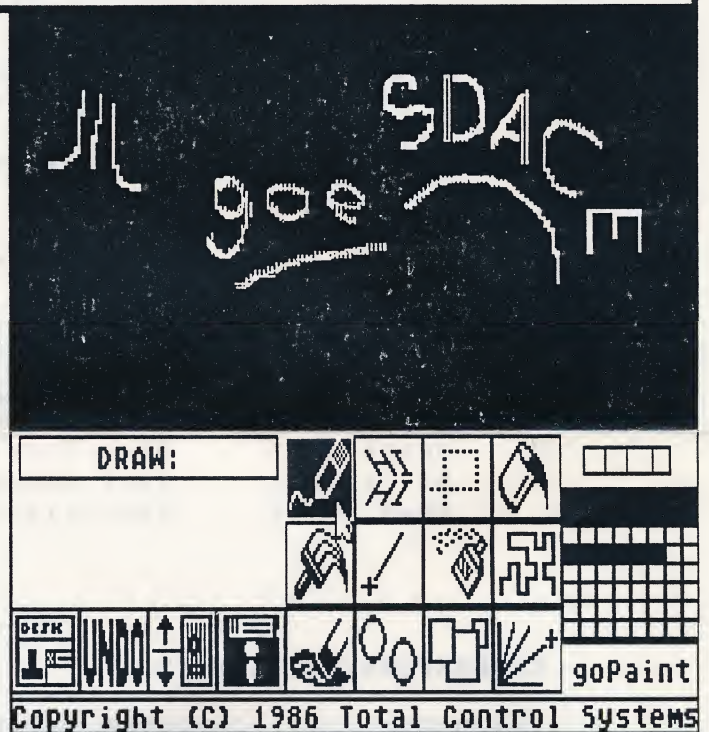
The I/O Connector

August
1988

The Newsletter of the San Diego Atari Computer Enthusiasts




SAUNDRA



No ST Meeting in August!: Instead, Pizza Social at Filippi's!

S.D.A.C.E. Has a New Treasurer; and We're Off to the Fairs, Too

WordPerfect Cheapskate Special  Act Now and SAVE!!!!

NeoDesk & G.O.E.- Reviews & Previews of Better Desktops

Backlash Great Arcade Entertainment for the Summer

Dave Small on Life, the 128K You-Know-What, and Everything

THE SAN DIEGO ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

(S.D.A.C.E.) is an independent, non-profit organization and user group with no connection to Atari Corporation. Membership includes access to the the program library, subscription to the **I/O Connector**, and access to other club activities. Permission to reprint articles from this newsletter in non-commercial form is permitted without specific authorization as long as original credit is granted.

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ST Library	Paul Huntington		
Newsletter	Tom Briant	224-8975	(5 PM-9 PM)

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SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

The editor welcomes all submissions. They must arrive by the 2nd Tuesday of the month to be printed in the next month's newsletter. Mail printed copy or 3.5" ST format disks with return postage to the club P.O. Box, or upload to the S.D.A.C.E. bulletin board by the 2d Monday of the month. Text must be in ST-Writer, 1ST WORD, WORD WRITER, WORD PERFECT, or ASCII format. Graphics must be hard-copy for the time being...

The Pursuit of Happiness by Tom Briant

S.D.A.C.E. has a new treasurer! Her name is Nancy Rivers and you can reach her at 670-6991. I want to thank all 3 candidates, Nancy, Dale Paulus, and Mike Street, for their participation in this mid-year election and to remind all of you that all posts come up for re-election at the December general meeting.

Speaking of general meetings, I goofed. No ST meeting will take place on August 15th. Instead, a Pizza Social will be held at Filippi's Pizza Grotto, 10330 Friars' Road, in the Long's Shopping Center behind the Black Angus Restaurant.

The ST Workshop meeting, though, will take place on Thursday, August 4th.

Now for something more exciting. In September, two computer fairs will take place. First, the San Diego Computer Society Fair will run September 3rd and 4th at the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple in Mission Valley. It's a great opportunity to see what everyone else does with their particular computer. Second, on September 16th and 17th, the Southern California ATARI Faire, sponsored by ACE-NET, will take over both floors of the Glendale Civic Auditorium. This is the largest Atari-specific event taking place this year. Don't miss it! Last year saw the introduction of SPECTRUM. This year...who knows? Good buys abound, and interesting products are on every table. Tom Hudson will hopefully speak there, too.

Now as an Atarian, you want to save money. So how do you lower your admissions cost? Simple. Volunteer to work at these events; to help set up equipment, guide people, act as security, whatever needs to be done to get the show open and closed on time. Call Mark Booth at 461-3021 to get involved.

While on the subject of saving money, WordPerfect wants you to pay less than \$200.00 for WordPerfect 4.1. They'll settle for a mere \$155.00, plus shipping, just to get you to use WordPerfect.

Since WordPerfect works on a wide range of computers, from Atari to Mac to IBM to DEC to Data General to UNIX and even Amiga, this is a **great** deal.

If you've seen NeoDesk in action, you probably thought, "Now that's the desktop I really want!" Before you buy it, though, read Mike Bergman's concise review to determine if it meets your needs. It may, it may not. In any event, I hope Gribnif Software keeps turning out great products like NeoDesk, so don't pirate it!

On the cover, you saw a snapshot of the goPaint program. Inside, you'll find two pages worth of pictures from G.O.E., the forthcoming 8-bit desktop and associated programs from Total Control Systems. For more details, contact TCS at :

Total Control Systems

4156 Toluwa Street

San Diego, CA 92117

1-619-270-0111 (Voice only)

If you want good entertainment on your screen, check out the Backlash review by Steve Bridges. Steve tries out every game he can and hopefully will tear himself from the joystick long enough to contribute a review every so often.

Dave Small, inventor of the Magic Sac, spoke at the July ST meeting. Yes, he is working on a 128K version, which he will name something besides "Magic Sac." Yes, it's his top priority. Yes, you should get the 6.X version of Magic Sac software, because it speeds up disk access significantly. If your disk drive runs faster than 300 rpm, the Twister formatter program may have problems. Dave's next project for the ST; Hyperweb, programs to make hard disks easier to use.

Dave also confirmed that many developers wage covert warfare against pirates by placing boobytrapped "pirate" versions of their own programs out for pirates. *You Have Been Warned!*

I want to thank Sandra Russ for contributing some of her artwork. I shall run more of it in coming months. If you have some artwork that looks good in black and white, let's see it!

Finally, Dave Small told us the "more pain, more gain" story. In order to concentrate on writing the original mouse control code for the Magic Sac, he played Neil Young. Live. Out Loud. Painful, but that code worked the first time and he hasn't changed it since.

Atari BBS List

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COMPUTER OUTLET	ST	282-6815
COMPUTER BLVD	ST	670-1095 (NEW!)
SMART 520	ST	480-9686
SMART 520	ST	726-4419
THE LORD'S HOUSE	XE	579-7354
THE LOONEY BIN	ST	390-9470
SHERWOOD FOREST	XE	273-5603

Updates and additions welcome!

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WordPerfect Corporation is offering WordPerfect 4.1 for the Atari to user group members at a special reduced price of \$155.00. This special offer will only be available from July 15th through September 15th.

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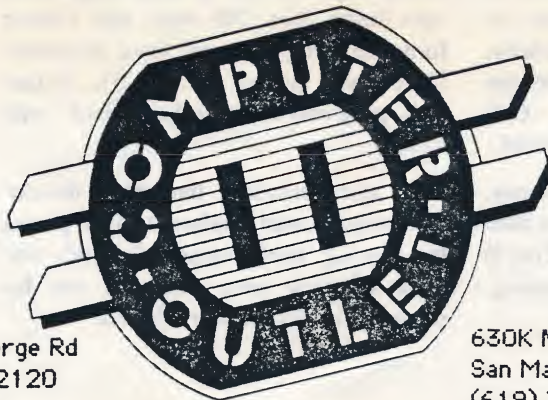
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Thought This Was Going To Be Easy?

please wait

by

John Kelleher, SDACE member

There are three significant things about the title of this article. 1. The first line of the title contains exactly 34 characters. 2. This title is what I see when I turn on my 130XE and the DOS 2.5 file RAMDISK.COM creates a RAM disk. 3. You, too, can easily change the title displayed as the RAM disk is created from "Setting Up ATARI 130XE Ram Disk -- **please wait**" to something more personal, or more humorous, or more--dare I mention the possibility--scatological, or, like mine, something more deeply in touch with the true nature of the universe. (For those with the proper philosophical bent, I suggest blanking out the first line completely and substituting for **please wait** the always-applicable):

YOUR NAME

Here's what to do. You don't need to know anything about assembly language. Just load the file RAMDISK.COM into your trusty AtariWriter or other word processor. Along with a bunch of gobbledygook, near the bottom of the file you will see the two title lines, in plain English. Simply replace those two lines with any text you wish, taking care to put into each line exactly the same number of characters as were in the original.

For example, the first title line contains 34 characters. (Note the blank spaces in front of the words. Blanks + words = 34.) To blank out the line completely, erase the original line and put in 34 spaces. Or put in whatever you like, as long as it adds up to 34. You can pad out the line with leading or trailing blanks if you need to. Since the RAMDISK.COM program inserts a trailing inverse-video blank at the end of the second title line, you should probably think of the whole second line as being in inverse video and plan accordingly.

Save the revised RAMDISK.COM to a DOS 2.5 disk you don't mind trashing if perchance you made a mistake in your editing. Now turn off your word processor and boot from the disk with the revised RAMDISK.COM. You should get your new title and a working RAM disk, too! Check that the RAM disk is installed properly. If the title doesn't come up, or something else is wrong, it probably means you didn't put in the correct number of characters in a title line, or you put them in the wrong place, or you erased something you shouldn't have. Just go back to your word processor, load in the original RAMDISK.COM, and start over.

I am more than mildly curious about what titles people will think up to put on their machines. Perhaps (hint!) the editor of this newsletter can sponsor a contest, with the 3 best (printable) titles to appear in the newsletter, along with the proud authors' names. Or, if it is a slow news month and the quality of entries warrants it, even more titles can be given their due in the newsletter.

The only rule should be: all entries should be actually usable. In other words, the first line can't be more than 34 characters (leading/trailing blanks will be

assumed for shorter lines). The second line can't be longer than 12 characters, and should be considered to be in inverse video; i.e., with emphasis added. Blank lines are legal, and any SDACE member can enter as often as is wished.

Authors, to your pens.

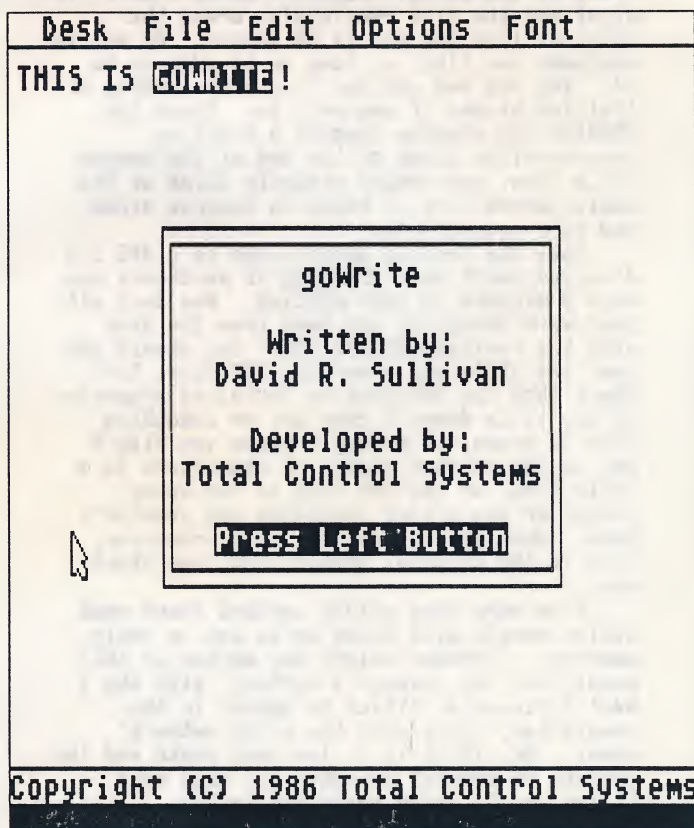
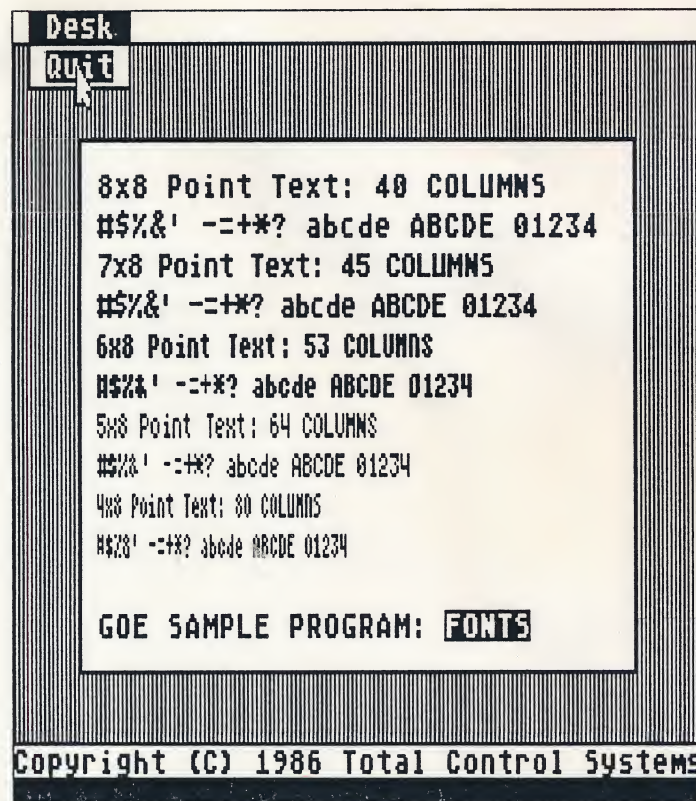
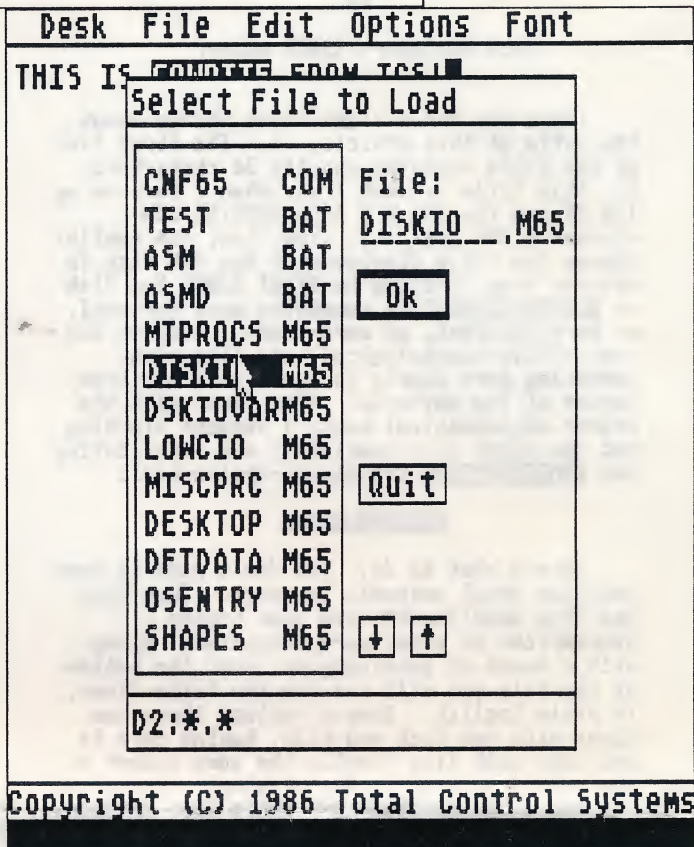
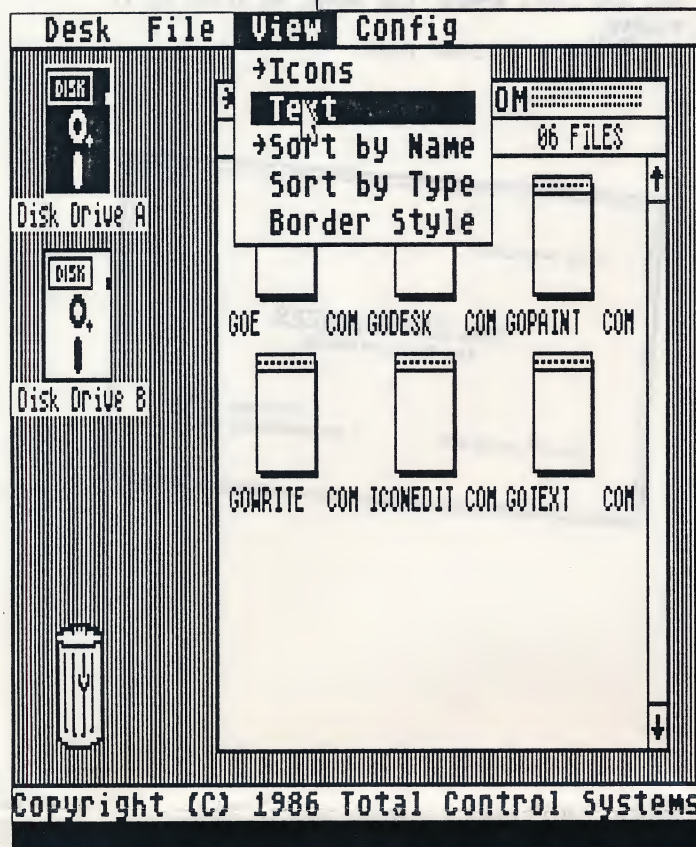
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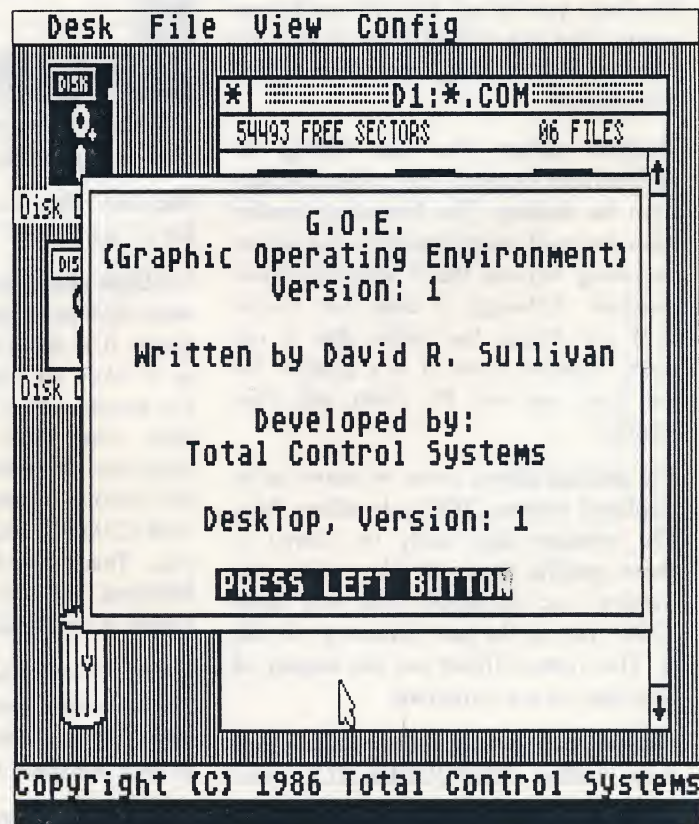
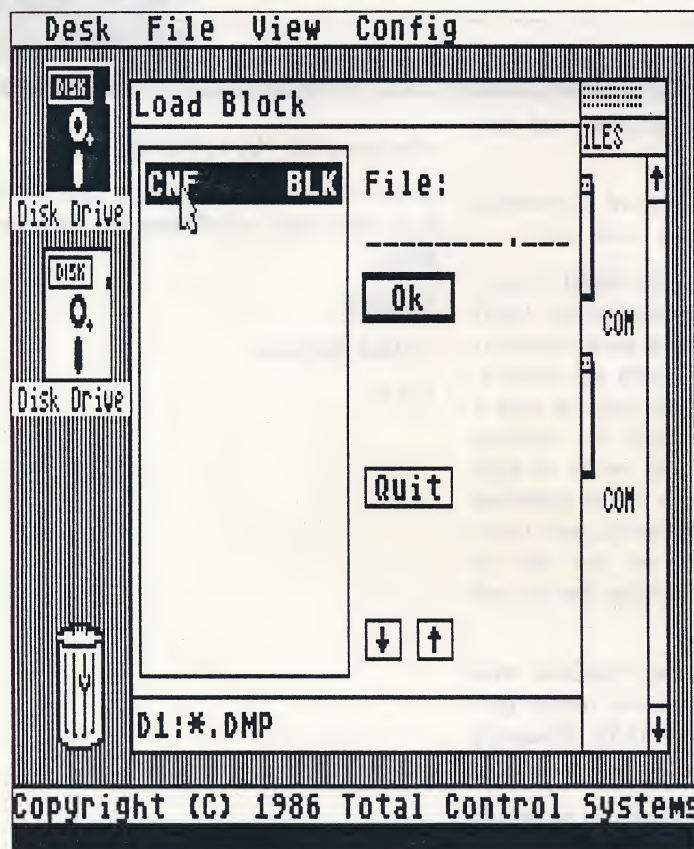
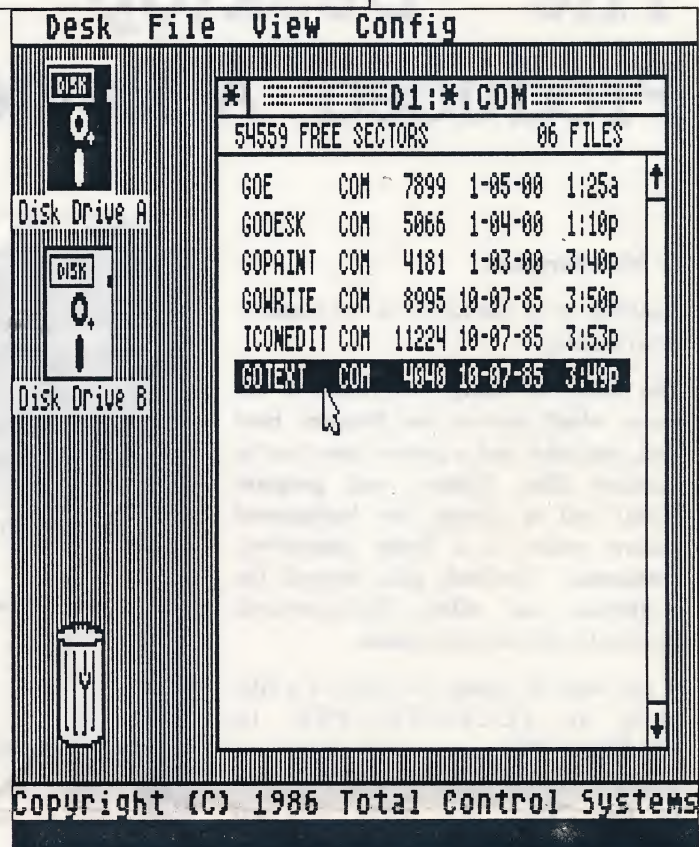
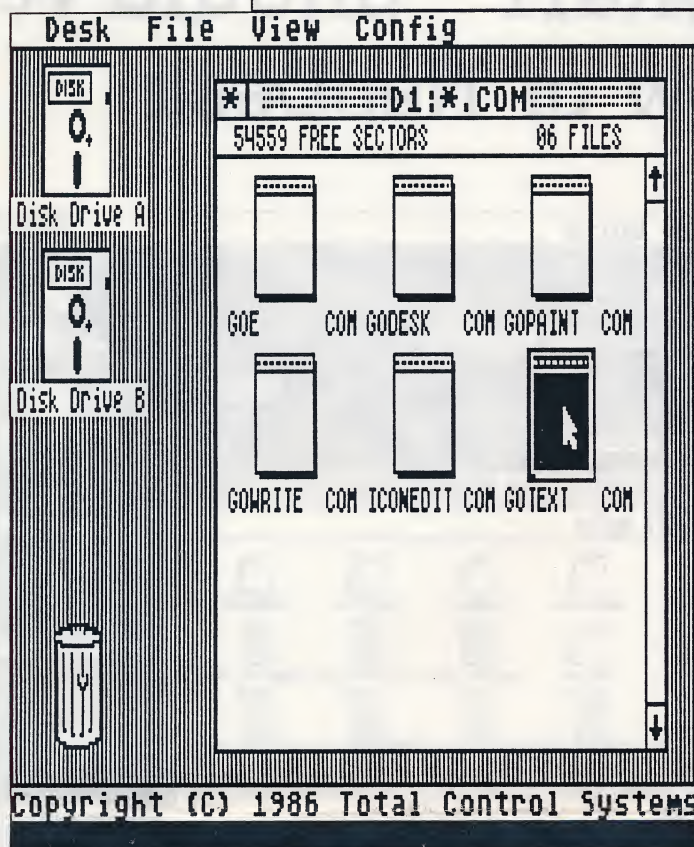
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G.O.E. PREVIEW



G.O.E. PREVIEW



The Desktop Atari Should've Produced: A Review of NeoDesk

by Mike Bergman

NeoDesk is an alternative to the standard Atari desktop.

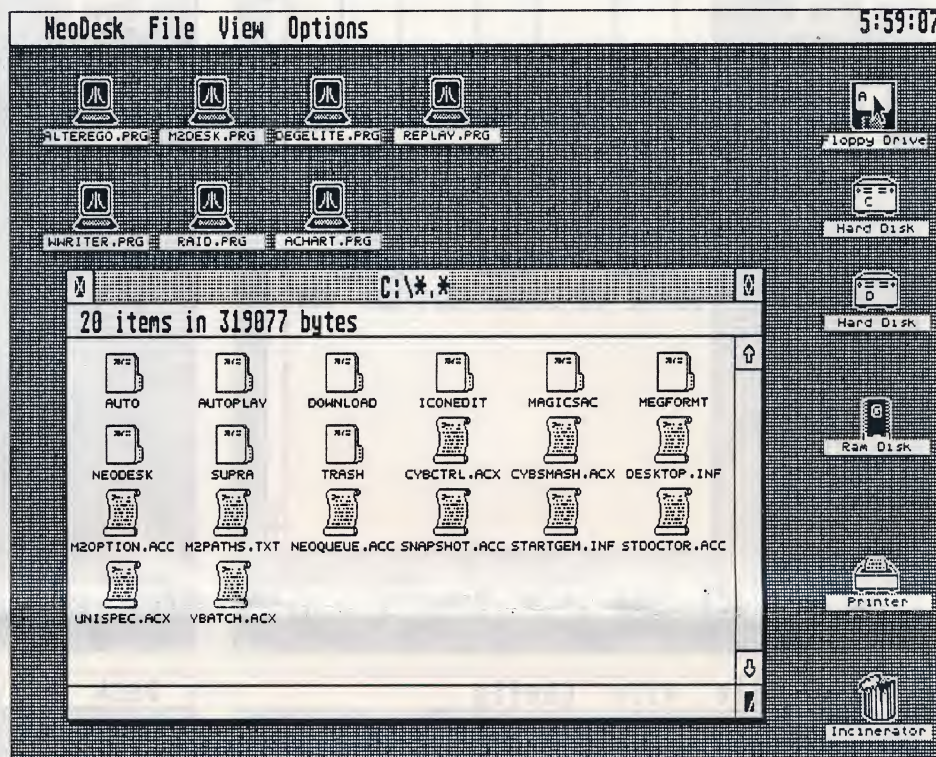
The ability to change the forms of the icons, which include two floppies, hard disk, ram disk and a printer icon (not to mention files, folders, and program icons) and to change the background pattern makes it a flashy alternative. Fortunately, NeoDesk goes beyond the aesthetics and offers key-command options for the desktop menus.

If you want to change the name of a file, such as FOLDRXXX.PRG to FOLDR100.PRG, you would guide your mouse to the top of the desktop and press on the "Show Info" menu item and change it using the Dialog box. With NeoDesk, you do not have to touch your mouse, just type CONTROL-S and the "Show Info" Dialog box will appear immediately.

NeoDesk allows for the editing of environment variables and command tails from the desktop. The formatting capabilities are much more complete and allows formatting beyond the 9 sector/80 track standard. Although, it does not format IBM nor Magic Sac disks, this is not really expected since it is a product for the Atari and not PC Ditto and Data Pacific.

The desktop allows seven windows to be displayed whereas TOS only allows four. The windows can easily be altered to show specific types of files within the window, i.e.: A:*.DOC will only show .DOC files in the root directory of disk A. This feature filters out the display of files that are not important.

The program comes with a desk accessory called NEOQUEUE.ACC that enables the printer icon and allows



multitasking between printing and any other action by the user.

NeoDesk also has keyboard commands for a "warm boot" and a "cold boot".

NeoDesk seems especially suited to software developers given the features listed above. It is not without a price, however, as it takes up 145K worth of memory. For people with 512K of memory, only a little over 150K is left for running programs. NeoDesk only works in high and medium resolutions. It has problems with CAD-3D, SuperGraphics, and Unispec. These problems are not due to NeoDesk but with programs that do not follow Atari standards.

I have found that using NeoDesk with the Universal Item Selector makes program development on TDI's Modula-2 graphic interface much easier.

I cannot recommend NeoDesk to people

who use CAD-3D, UNISPEC,

or low resolution extensively, however, it is a solid piece of software for programmers.

NeoDesk

Gribnif Software

\$29.95

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly...

A software review for Atari ST's.

The Good,

Remember **Battlezone**? I loved Battlezone. Battlezone was really a simple game, kill or be killed. Yet, it had a certain other-worldly quality about it. I could really put my face up to the periscope and get the feeling of being in some other dimension, populated by geometric enemies and triangular abstract obstacles. When the ST version of Battlezone was released I expected the graphics to be at least as fast a StarGlider. I was disappointed though, because it was slow, it was in low resolution (it should have been in high and medium), and was jerky. We need a good Battlezone game for the ST.

Now we have **Backlash**. Backlash is what Battlezone should have been and more. If you liked the arcade version of Battlezone, then you'll like Backlash. The same basic premise is there. You're on some abstract, geometric realm and there are some other "things" there that don't want you to be. So you blow them to hell while they try to do the same to you. The game plays like Battlezone, but it does not look like it, it looks better. The graphics are solid, filled and shaded shapes. The scrolling is much faster than the ST version of Battlezone or even the arcade version for that matter. Instead of driving a tank your flying some type of craft, just skimming the surface, flying around looking for something to shoot a ball of fire at. Your weapons are unique in that they bounce. It's quite a sight to fire a large volly of fireballs and see them bouncing off into the distance like some sadistic beachball. It's even better to see one of these fireballs reach it's mark, which results in a shower of cascading debris and shadows for each. Your opponents aren't quite the hard rudimentary shapes that I liked in the original Battlezone. Backlash's bad guys are much more circular or cone shaped in their design. There are no tank-like opponents, only low flying, fast moving ships that fire the bouncing fireballs like you do. There is one ship in particular which is really neat. It opens up to an eyeball when you get close enough, which can be dangerous. There is a blazzing missile which will hunt you down unles you manage to shoot if first. The ultimate enemy is a strangely shaped ship that will launch wave after wave of fireballs that look like a snake headed straight at you. Getting two of these ships after you can be exciting to say the least. If any of you have played *Encounter* on the Atari 8-bit computers then the game should ring a bell.

Backlash is not a thinking game there is no real strategy involved. It's just fun, a lot of fun. There are great graphics, good music and lots of speed. I **recommend** it.



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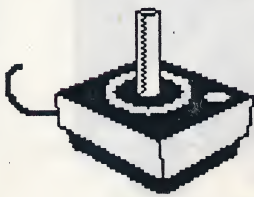
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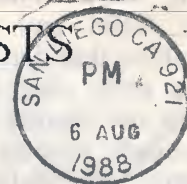
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THE **SEPTEMBER 8-BIT** meeting will be held on **September 8th** at the Rec Center, 10540 Caminito Baywood, in Mira Mesa at 7:00 pm. The **ST beginners/hands-on workshop** will be held at North Park Rec Center (Across from Folsom's Racquetball Court) **September 1st** at 6:30 p.m. The **regular ST meeting** occurs on **September 19th** at the North Park Rec Center, Social Room facility, at 6:30 p.m.